

REMARKS

Claims 1-8, 10-13, and 15-17 remain in this application. Claims 9 and 14 are now canceled. Reconsideration of the application is requested.

Independent claim 1 is again rejected, along with claims 2-6, 16, and 17, as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,773,031 to Haig. Reconsideration is again requested.

As noted previously, in each of the Haig configurations, a door panel is in direct contact at one side and vertically with an inner side door panel. Referring once again to Figures 7 and 8, for example, the outer panel of the side door 22c extends vertically slightly above the door panel and has an upper wall section that is bent approximately horizontally and directed toward the side window 24c and the door and inner side door panels. During a side impact, the deployment member 52c of the deployment device 16c extends upward in a vertical direction, thereby pressing the horizontally aligned wall section of the panel upward so that the latter then extends approximately vertically as shown, for example, in Figure 8. The curtain 14c emerges between the window 24c and the inner door panel after a tear seam 40c of the housing 30c is ripped, and the curtain 14c is guided upwards by the deployment device 16c connected thereto.

Again, moreover, it is to be noted that the Haig deployment device 16 is arranged inside of the body of a vehicle door and has a complex and expensive design. The Haig device introduces considerable risk for occupants of the vehicle in its extended position, since it extends to an immediate head impact area of a vehicle occupant and, when a horizontal wall section of the panel is shifted to a vertically aligned position, partial areas of the panel break away. The present

invention, in contrast to the Haig configuration, provides a prefabricated airbag module arranged in a cavity between a door interior element, such as the large area internal sheet 16 shown in Figure 2 of the present application, and an internal covering, such as 11. It is respectfully submitted that the Haig patent fails to disclose a side impact protective apparatus for a motor vehicle occupant comprising, in addition to the other features specified, a covering including an upper edge side region, a lower edge side region, and a front face as specified and in which the upper edge side region is connected to the lower edge side region along a connection line as recited, in which the connection line is disposed adjacent a lower gas bag edge as recited, in which the connection line forms a pivot axis as recited, and in which the front face includes a weakening as claim 1 now defines.

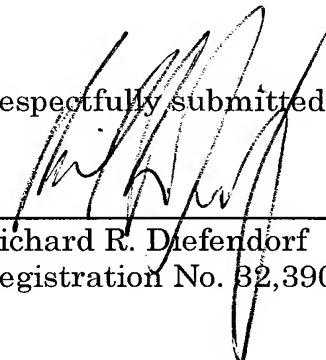
The secondary documents relied on together with the Haig patent disclosure by the Examiner in sections 6-9 on pages 3-5 of the Office Action do not suggest modifying the Haig device so as to meet the limitations now included in claim 1, and it is respectfully submitted that claim 1 as it now appears in the application is patentable for the reasons discussed above. The rest of the claims in this application are dependent claims and are patentable as well.

If there are any questions regarding this Reply or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

If necessary to effect a timely response, this paper should be considered as a petition for an extension of time sufficient to effect a timely response. Please charge any deficiency in fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 05-1323 (Docket #028987.52962US).

Date: January 17, 2007

Respectfully submitted,



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